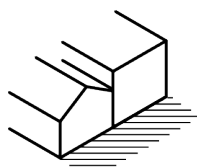




## HOW-TO GUIDE



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THIS GUIDE IS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR KCMO NEIGHBORHOOD OPEN STREETS PROGRAM

# WHY OPEN STREETS?

For the past few weeks, COVID-19 has completely changed the way we live our lives. We have all done our part to flatten the curve by staying home, wearing masks, and supporting our favorite local businesses from afar. Because of this, vehicular traffic on our major highways and local streets has greatly reduced.

As neighbors, we have searched for ways to maintain a bit of normalcy, which includes one of the things we're allowed to do: exercise. This has caused a great increase in the usage of our community parks and trails. According to Rails to Trails, "Nationwide, trail use is up by nearly 200 percent. Surging demand for trails and outdoor places is making it increasingly difficult for people to keep 6-feet of space between each other."

Our streets were created to keep us moving, the way in which we get that movement has changed due to COVID-19. Therefore, many cities have started to rethink our streets to better support pedestrians, bicyclists, and scooterists.\*

And, a couple weeks ago, KCMO joined that growing list of cities with its Open Streets Program. Unlike most other cities, however, KCMO has taken it a step further with its Open Streets Neighborhood Permit, giving you the chance to transform your neighborhood streets. The Public Works department has streamlined the application process so you can easily sign up your community (after getting permission from your neighbors).

In a first-of-its kind collaboration, KCMO Public Works, along with the Better Block Foundation, will provide a KCMO Neighborhood Open Streets Kit, powered by Spin.

The following pages outline the project, and provide a guide for how to best maximize the next few weeks in your KCMO Neighborhood Open Streets project.

We are excited to work alongside you and learn with you as we all navigate this new world. Because, we'll be honest: When we realized the gravity of COVID-19, we were hit with a bit of despair. Our work at the Better Block is all about bringing people together to celebrate community. How could we possibly do that when people are self-isolating?

Well, over the past few weeks, we have seen exactly what that looks like. It's coming together, but staying apart. It's creatively encouraging one another from our front porches and our windows. It's tackling new projects that provide a bit of respite for someone who needs it. It's making masks, and delivering groceries. It's ordering gift cards to be used at a later date (or not at all).

Through these actions, we believe the world has never been closer, and for that, we thank you. Thank you for showing us how strong our communities are even when we're all apart.

Now, let's build some Open Streets together (but, you know, separately)!



Krista Nightengale

MANAGING DIRECTOR  
BETTER BLOCK FOUNDATION  
KRISTA@BETTERBLOCK.ORG

## \* ACCORDING TO RAILS TO TRAILS

Austin, Texas (1.13 miles); Baltimore, Maryland (1.4 miles); Bend, Oregon; Boston, Massachusetts (5.61 miles); Brookline, Massachusetts (2.42 miles); Burlington, Vermont (24.76 miles); Cleveland, Ohio (6 miles); Denver, Colorado (16.1 miles); Des Moines, Iowa (0.16 miles); Duluth, Minnesota (2.5 miles); Emeryville, CA (0.21 miles); Kyle, Texas (golf course opened as temporary walking trail); Louisville, Kentucky (11 miles); Madison, Wisconsin; Montgomery County, Maryland (1.1 miles); Minneapolis, Minnesota (20.32 miles); New Haven, Connecticut (3.13 miles); New York, New York (0.77 miles temporary bike lanes); Oakland, California (74 miles); Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (4 miles); Portland, Oregon (7.5 miles); Saint Paul, Minnesota (1.66 miles); Salt Lake City, Utah (1.33 miles); San Francisco, California (2 miles); Seattle, Washington (8.5 miles); Springfield, Illinois (1.33 miles); Washington, D.C. (7.15 miles).



## MEET THE BETTER BLOCK FOUNDATION

The Better Block is a 501(c)3 urban design nonprofit that educates, equips, and empowers communities and their leaders to reshape and reactivate built environments to promote the growth of healthy and vibrant neighborhoods. We work to show neighbors that they have the power and resources to affect change in their communities, and we work alongside city staff to identify hurdles and overcome them to bring this change to life.

Based out of the Oak Cliff neighborhood of Dallas, we work around the world turning empty lots into beautiful plazas; overbuilt streets into markets; and have given run-down, vacant buildings new life. We would never proclaim to know it all or have seen it all, but we have seen a lot and we've learned a lot. We are creative when it comes to roadblocks, tenacious in turning a permitting no into a yes, and adapt at finding fixes.

From the very beginning, we have open-sourced many

of our concepts and ideas, allowing the idea of the Better Block to spread around the country and the world. BetterBlockKC was founded in 2012 by passionate citizens inspired by Better Block's success in Dallas. These passionate residents recognized that in the 'Show Me State' the only way to prove how streets could be redesigned for the better was to actually demonstrate how these improvements would function and feel to experience. In 2014, DuRon Netsell took on the role of leading the volunteer-based organization to continue advocating for and demonstrating safer street designs.

In the last 8 years, BetterBlockKC has received multiple awards, grants, and nationwide recognition for its work in temporarily redesigning streets and intersections throughout Kansas City.

To learn more, visit [betterblock.org](https://betterblock.org) and follow [@BetterBlock](https://twitter.com/BetterBlock) on social media.

# MEET OUR PARTNERS



## KCMO PUBLIC WORKS

The Public Works Department provides optimal value in designing, building, operating, and maintaining the City's streets, bridges, and parking infrastructure. The mission of the Public Works Department is to provide and maintain public infrastructure and assets by ensuring safe transportation for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists, and accessible municipal parking to serve the citizens of Kansas City, Missouri in the most responsible manner.

KCMO Public Works is responsible for maintaining 6,000 lane miles of roadway, 560 bridges and culverts, 95,000 lights, 855 traffic signals, 155,000 signs, 2,200 linear miles of sidewalks, 2 miles of streetcar tracks, a growing network of bicycle facilities, and much more.

Visit [kcmo.gov/city-hall/departments/public-works](https://kcmo.gov/city-hall/departments/public-works).

The logo for SPIN, featuring the word 'SPIN' in a bold, orange, sans-serif font, slanted slightly to the right.

## SPIN

Spin's Safe, Livable, and Just Streets Initiative funds and mobilizes projects that rethink street design and the rules that govern them, working in close partnership with the government and the community. As an operator of e-scooters, Spin believes it needs to take a more hands-on role in the funding, testing, and implementation of critical infrastructure projects that make its business possible. To find out more about Spin's Safe, Livable, and Just Streets Program.

Visit [www.spin.pm/streets](https://www.spin.pm/streets).



# MISSION OF THE PROGRAM

The Better Block Foundation, Spin, and KCMO Public Works partnered together on this initiative because we believe wholeheartedly in communities coming together in spaces designed for them. We know that COVID-19 has separated folks, and we know that is imperative to flattening the curve. We also recognize that the moments we're allowed outside enable us to exercise, relieve the boredom, and connect us in small ways. But it must be done while maintaining social distancing. **With this program, we hope to make it as easy as possible for communities to come together while staying apart.**

# WHAT IS KCMO OPEN STREETS?

In order to promote social distancing and also provide safe space for residents to get outside and get exercise, KCMO is creating more space for people on the roadways and in parks.



“Exercise and getting outdoors go a long way in decreasing stress and promoting healthy living. The emergency Open Streets program accomplishes the goal of maintaining social distancing while also giving our residents safe space to get outside and be physically active.”

**Eric Bunch**

FOURTH DISTRICT COUNCILPERSON &  
CO-SPONSOR OF THE OPEN STREETS RESOLUTION

## WHAT OPEN STREETS KC DOES

**Neighborhood Open Streets Permit** allows block-level closures on neighborhood streets. Similar to the Block Party permit, but without the party, this permit is streamlined to be easy and accessible for neighborhoods or residents to apply at no cost and without signature requirements. The permit is available in [CompassKC](#).

**Automatic pedestrian crossings** at over 100 intersections means the pedestrian signal turns on automatically without having to push the pedestrian button.

Additionally, KC Parks is closing parks roadways to vehicles in several KCMO parks including Swope Park and Blue Valley Park. KC Parks also encourages everyone to walk, run, or play counterclockwise on all loop trails to help with social distancing.

**“Local Traffic Only” Road Closures** allow more space to safely walk, run, and bike while maintaining social distance. The following road closures will be deployed with existing, internal resources, still allowing access to local traffic and emergency vehicles:

- **Kenwood Avenue 39th to 43rd St.** - Gillham Park Area
- **Brookside Road Meyer to Gregory Blvd and 77th to 83rd St.** - Trolley Track Trail Area
- **Summit Street, 52nd St. to 55th St.** - Loose Park Area
- **River Front Drive Union Berkley Riverfront Apartments east to dead end** - Berkley Riverfront Park Area

Open Streets KC is an emergency and temporary program that will last through the Stay at Home order, **May 15, 2020**. For additional information, [visit the Open Streets KC webpage](#).



# INTRO TO TACTICAL URBANISM

## How to make your street great

The KCMO Neighborhood Open Streets program is made possible by you—and tactical urbanism. What is tactical urbanism? It's a movement that began a little more than a decade ago by neighbors who wanted to make improvements to their streets and sidewalks. Generally, the initiatives are grassroots, and quickly implemented with lower-cost items that can demonstrate a potential long-term change.

In this case, we're using this technique so

you can close your neighborhood street to thru traffic (but still allow local traffic, such as deliveries, emergency vehicles, and residents' vehicles). By closing your street to thru traffic, you're opening it up to allow more space for pedestrians, bicyclists, and scooters.

The next few pages outline the steps you need to take for implementation, as well as gives some material and design guidelines. So, let's get started.





# SPREAD THE WORD

## Share the idea with your community

At this point, you have decided to close your street, gained permission from your neighborhood to do so, and received a permit. Congratulations! We're here to guide you through the next few steps to make the program in your neighborhood successful.

First, communicate with your neighbors about the plan. Reach out to your community and let them know that you're applying for a permit, so the street closure does not come as a surprise. To do this, we recommend the following:

- Create a flyer or door hanger with the pertinent information (who, what, where, when, and duration) and distribute to each neighbor.

- Use some chalk and leave a few messages on the sidewalk.
- Create a map with details on start and end points, and any notable details along the route (nearby businesses, distance to other trails, etc.).
- Use social media to let everyone know what's going on and to keep them updated. Be sure to follow [@betterblock](#) and [@ridespin](#) to share photos and videos of your project. Also, include [#KCMOOpenStreets](#).

A key message point is that this is temporary. You get to test out a concept, tweak, adapt, and then remove it.

# PREPARE

## Materials needed for Open Streets



Use reflective tape on vertical elements to increase visibility.



Alert vehicles that the street is closed to thru traffic by posting the flyers located on the last few pages.



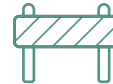
Use paint or traffic cones to delineate spaces for various modes of transportation.



Use temporary paint or chalk to let pedestrians know about the changes.



Stencils encouraging people to keep moving.



Incorporate a removable traffic element, such as a CNCd or rented barricade, so that pass-thru vehicle encroachment is restricted.

---

## Your starter kit

Here are a few items to consider when putting your street together.



# MATERIALS NEEDED

There are a few tools you'll need to transform your street quickly. These are just the basics for your recipe. Use yours and your neighbors' creativity to take your street to the next level.

## Barricades

Barricades are essential at the entry points of your street. Better Block Foundation has created a design that is cut with a CNC router. With just a 2x6x10 from a hardware store and a couple screws, you can instantly have a barricade. Add some reflective tape and bright paint to ensure it stands out.

## Cones

Another essential element is cones. These can be purchased or rented. The cones are delineators to the street signaling to both motorists and pedestrians who's allowed where. See the designs on pages 14-15 to determine where the cones should go in your street.

## Reflective Tape

Use the reflective tape on the barricades to draw attention to them when lights are low. You can also place the tape around other vertical elements that are being used to slow down traffic.

## Paint

For the KCMO Neighborhood Open Streets Program, we are using tempera paint for the stencil markings. This paint will wash away in one to two rains and will need to be reapplied.

You could also use spray chalk, however, this is much harder to remove and will require a powerwasher. When using paint in KCMO, adhere to the MUTCD guidelines, which indicate that you are to only use earth tones in paint colors. **The exact pantone colors are listed on page 10.**

## Wikiblock

Wikiblock is an online library of street-furniture designs developed by the Better Block Foundation. These designs can be downloaded by anyone anywhere for free, and cut out using a CNC router (found at most local makerspaces, in colleges, and through fabrication shops). These designs can then be built without any glue, screws, or nails. For more, go to [betterblock.org/wikiblock](https://betterblock.org/wikiblock).

## Landscaping Elements

Few things transform a street into a space for people better than greenery. With a few plants, planters, or maybe even some borrowed trees, the space cools down and calms down. A splash of green on the gray concrete communicates to all that the space is for everyone.

## Elements in the Neighborhood

Ask your neighbors what elements they have that you may be able to borrow.

Tires could become a planter. Pallets could be a single-person bench. Some extra hand sanitizer could be setup into a wash station. There are a lot of resources at your fingertips.

## Art

Art is just as important as any of the other elements in creating a space for people. Work with neighbors to organize an art exhibit that could be placed in the street or showcase the creativity of the people around you.





# KEEP PEOPLE MOVING

## Use stencils and signage to ensure social distancing

The KCMO Neighborhood Open Streets program is intended to relieve pressure from overcrowded trails and parks by allowing residents to use their streets as a space to exercise. But it is vital that neighbors do not congregate in order for this program to work. To help with this, we have provided a couple different stencils to use along the stretch of the Open Street. Another option to consider is a volunteer corps of folks who would sign up for shifts to

take a walk, ride their bikes, ride scooters, or go for a run. These folks would ensure that people are not congregating and would encourage everyone to keep moving.

Along with the stencils, we recommend signage printed out and placed on vertical elements. We also recommend using messaging on the Wayfinding Structure (see more on page 13) to encourage people to keep moving.





Yes, you can make this! See instructions attached.

## WAYFINDING

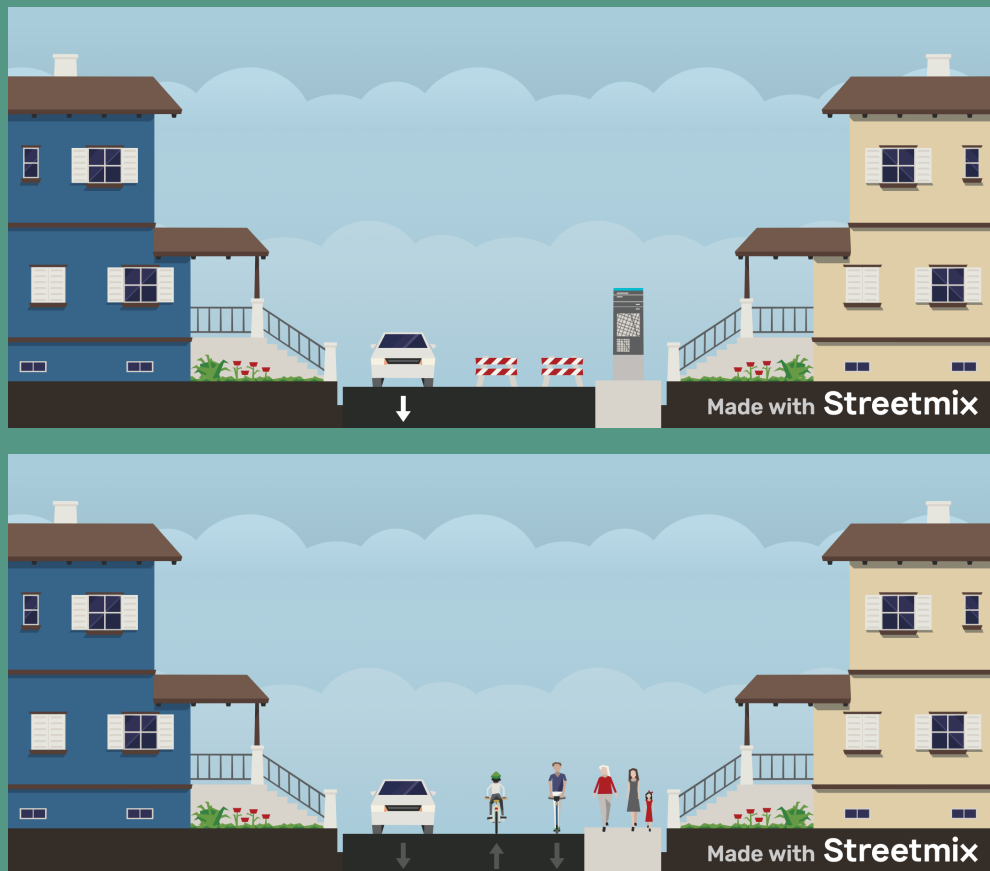
We highly recommend including wayfinding elements in your KCMO Neighborhood Open Streets. We have created a structure that has been produced by a local fabricator. It's as easy to put together as anything you find at Ikea (actually, it's easier).

Wayfinding is signage that guides people to areas of interest in a neighborhood. Feel free to get creative with the wayfinding structure. If you're on a street that has businesses doing to-go, paint/write those businesses in and let people know how many minutes away they are by foot, bike, or scooter. If you don't have any businesses in the area to point to, perhaps point out the local park, next nearest trail, or any other highlights of the neighborhood.

Or you can use wayfinding to share encouraging messages for your neighbors. Or perhaps your neighbors can each take an element of the piece and decorate them as they see fit. The options are endless. Whatever you decide to do, be sure to show us by tagging [@betterblock](#) and [@ridespin](#) and tagging [#KCMOOpenStreets](#).

# POTENTIAL DESIGN APPROACHES

Each neighborhood is unique but have a few similar characteristics. We would need more information to determine which design approach is best for you, but in general, here are two design approaches to consider.



## Option 1: Shared Space With 1-Way Traffic Lane

For this option, you could close off one side of the street and create space for pedestrians/bicyclists/scooters. The other side would become a one-way for local traffic, delivery, and emergency vehicles.

Block off the entrance on either side with the barriers. Post notes on the barricades alerting that this street is not for thru traffic. Add signage indicating that the open side is for one-way traffic only.

Use cones as delineators between the two spaces ensuring to not leave space for vehicles to cross over.

## Option 2: Closed Center, 2-Way Traffic Lanes

If there's enough room, you can transform the center portion of your street into shared-use space and allow local traffic, delivery, and emergency vehicles on either side.

The traffic lanes would need to be 11-feet each. Place the barricades in the middle with signage alerting that the street is not open to thru traffic. Use the cones to create a center lane for shared-use space. And, again, you could place the wayfinding as a block instead of a barricade.

In this situation, you need to be careful how you treat the areas in which the pedestrians cross the traffic lanes to get to the center. If creating a

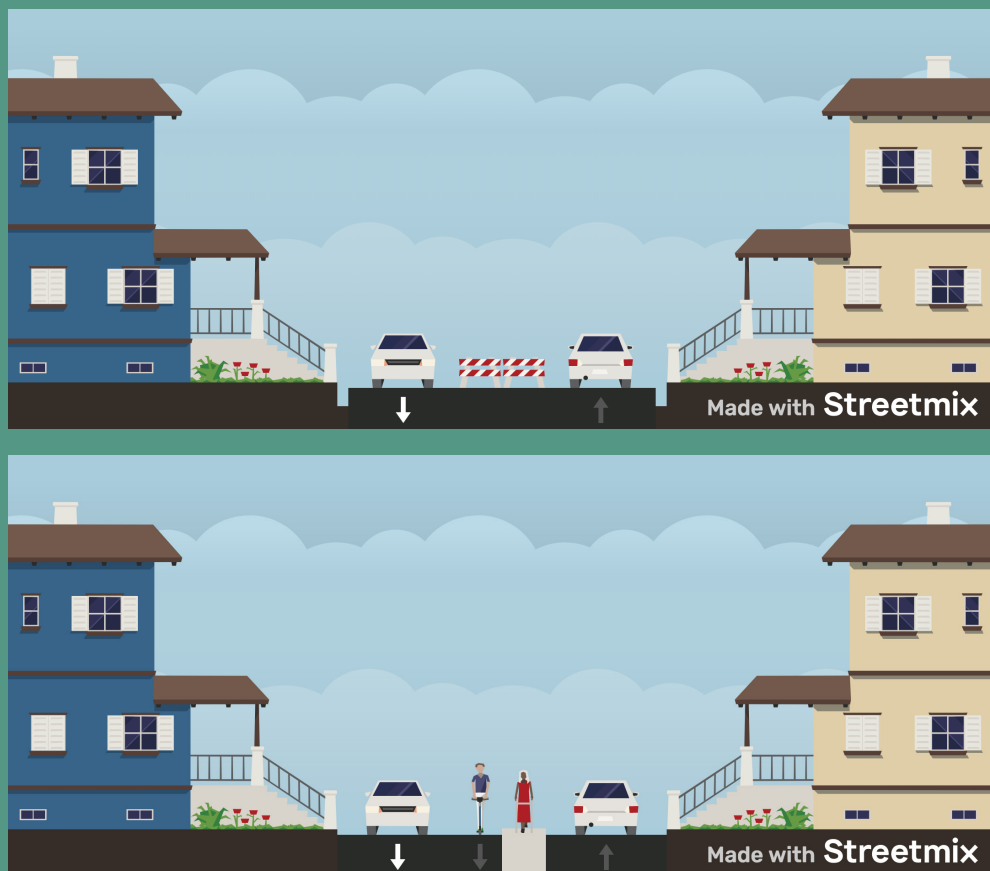
crosswalk, be sure to follow MUTCD guidelines.

If you have intersections in your street, you will need to treat them carefully. The goal for intersection design is to create a space that helps people avoid conflict, regardless of their mode of transportation.

The National Association of City Transportation Officials is the ultimate go-to source on all things streets, bikes, and designs. Their Urban Bikeway Design Guide outlines several approaches to intersections that are relevant to the KCMO Neighborhood Open Streets program.

Go here for NACTO's complete guide on intersection treatments, but pay special attention to:

- Intersection Crossing Markings
- Through Bike Lanes
- Combined Bike Lane/Turn Lane
- Cycle Track Intersection Approach







# METRICS

## Gather the data to measure your impact

Now that you have your street set up, and you've closed it off to thru traffic, you can enjoy! Walk it, bike it, scoot it, and be sure to stay at least six-feet away from your neighbors. However, your work is not done. This is the portion of the project that's most vital to potential changes to your street.

**Do your neighbors like the approach?**

**Do some parts of it work, but not overall?**

This is your time to measure, document, and share. Work with volunteers to gather data. There are a few ways you can go about this.

One of our favorite resources is [Gehlpeople.com/tools](https://gehlpeople.com/tools). Here you can find tools for age and gender tally, people moving count, participant survey, stationary activity mapping, 12-quality criteria, and a public life data protocol.

Not all these tools make sense for COVID-19 measurements, so you can pick and choose what means the most to you, your neighbors, and your elected officials.

Another interesting element to measure is the speed (or change in speed). It's best to gather some of the measurements before implementation, but no worries if you weren't able to. You can always gather the data after you remove your Open Street.

There are a couple ways you can measure traffic speeds. One is to borrow a traffic gun (or buy one). Or, more simply, you can download a speed gun app on your phone and measure from afar.

Put together an excel sheet and measure several times a day consistently throughout the duration of your project. Do the same after you've taken the project down.

Check out the work that 880 Streets has put together in their Open Streets program. They are a wealth of knowledge for all things Open Streets related, including evaluating. They have an exhaustive list of resources to at the [Open Streets Project](#).

Be sure to share your findings with KCMO City Staff.





## CLEANUP AND REMOVAL

### All demonstrations must come to an end

Once the shelter-in-place is lifted, your street will need to return to normal. Remove all the paint from the ground, gather the cones to be returned, and take down the barricades and wayfinding structures. Those last two items are yours. You can use them for future projects or recycle them.

Share what you found. After the project, gather all your measurements, your neighbors' photos, any social media, and any quotes from your community about the impact of the project, and share that with us. We'd love to know how it went and how people felt about it. Also, share

this information with your local elected officials. Work with your neighbors to incorporate elements that worked into a long-term plan.

And, remember, temporary projects are beautiful in that they allow the ability to test elements without making long-term investments. They can lead to impactful changes, or support existing hypotheses. Over the past few weeks, you have done something special in your neighborhood. What happens next is entirely up to you.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Instructions and flyers for your use

The next few pages include a few instructions and flyers you may need throughout the duration of your project.

You'll see instructions on Better Block's Wayfinding structure as well as the CNCd barricades. These elements can help block off the street to pass-thru traffic.

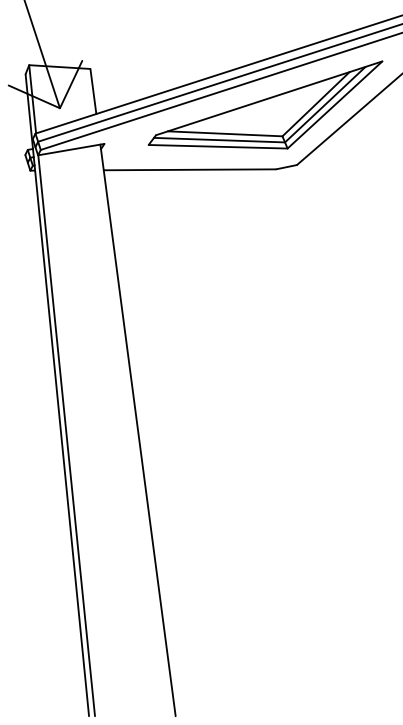
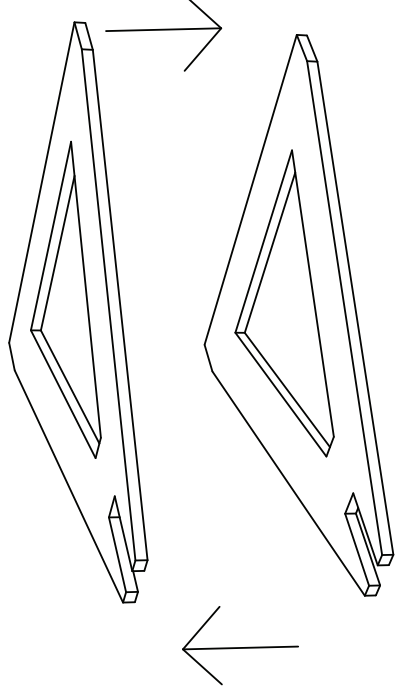
Build these elements, then feel free to add your creative spin to them with paint.

Next, we have a few templates for the flyers that you can use to post around the neighborhood to let people know what's going on. Feel free to create your own, and share with us!

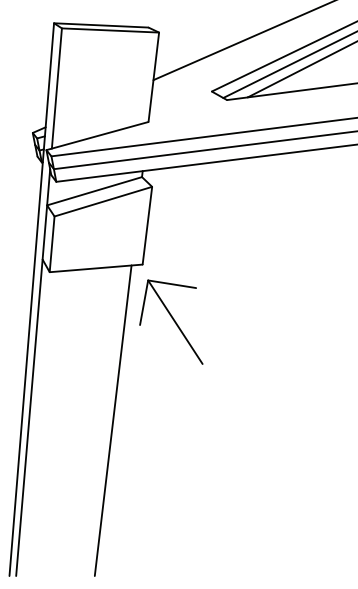


# Better Block Barricade Instructions

Glue or screw two triangle pieces together to make double thick



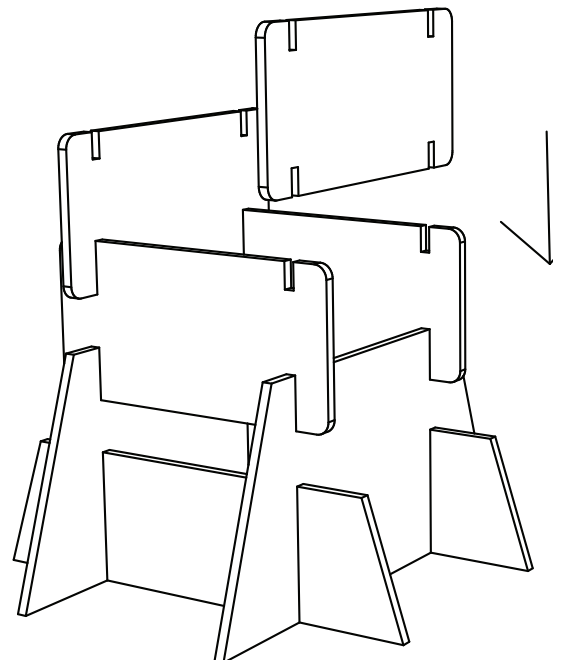
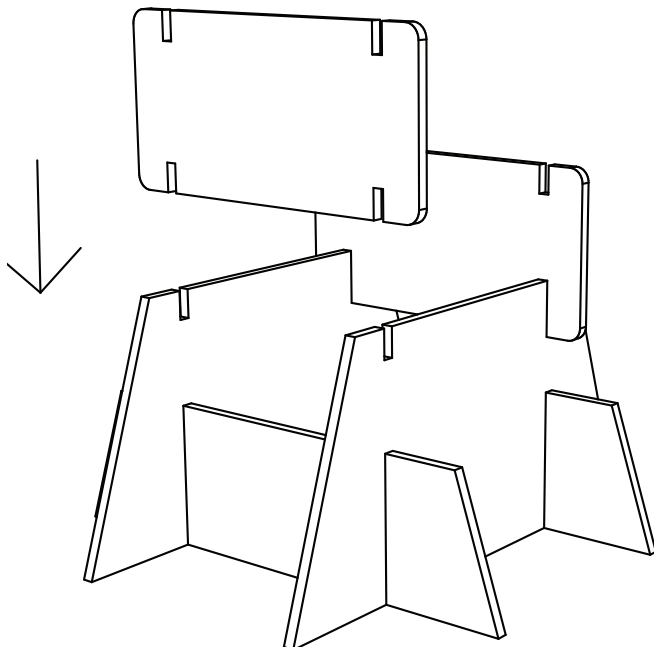
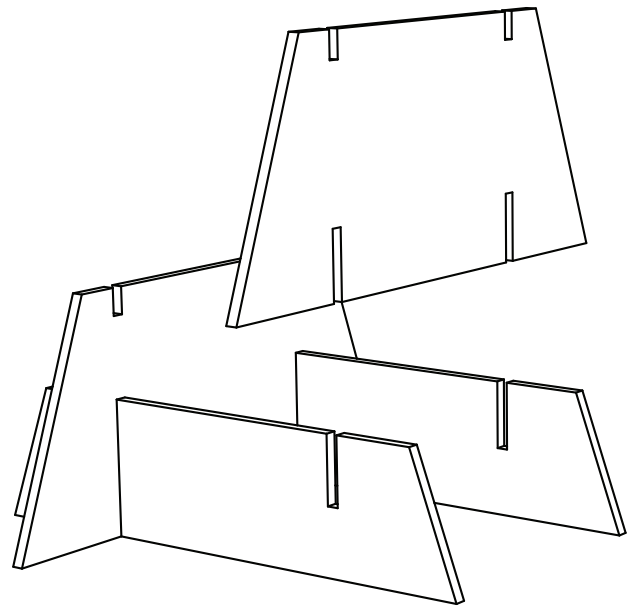
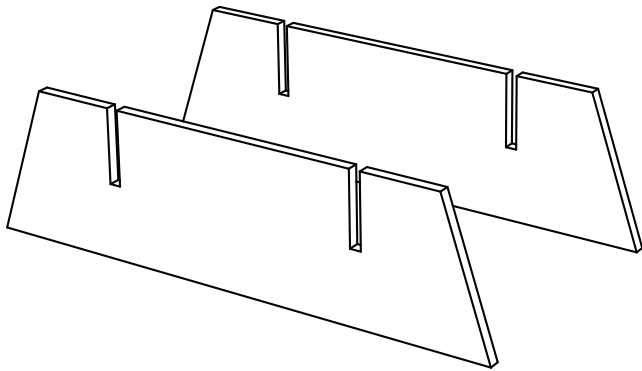
Option 1: Run a few screws through the triangle into the 2x6 to hold in place



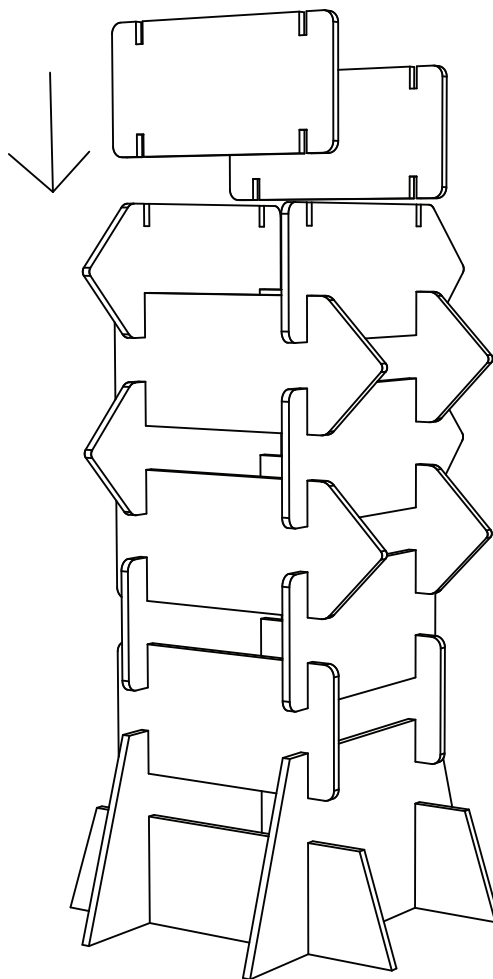
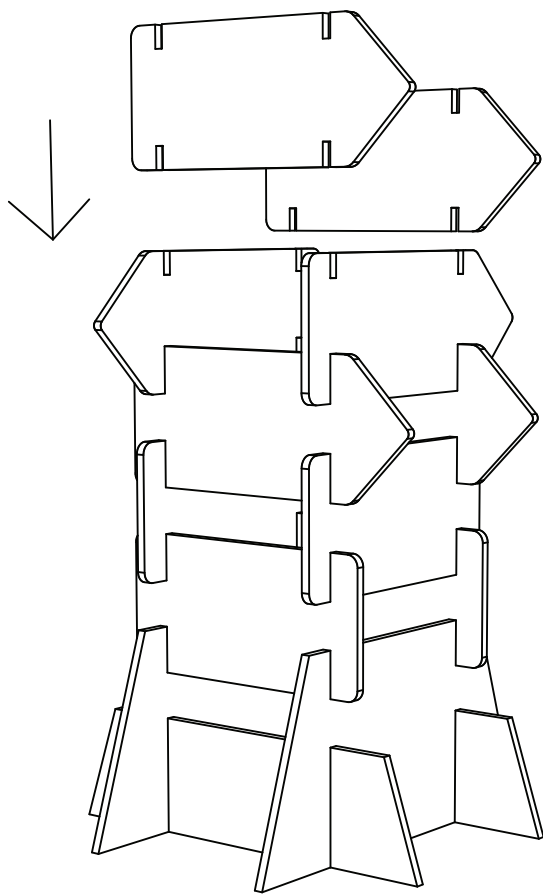
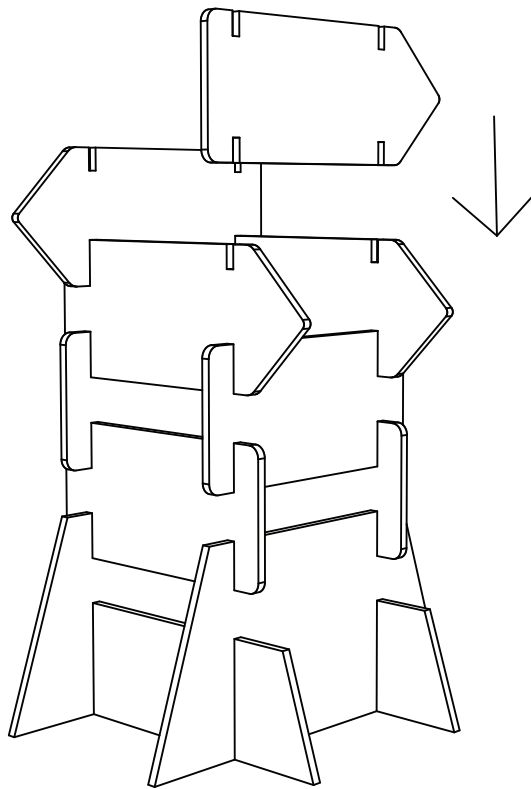
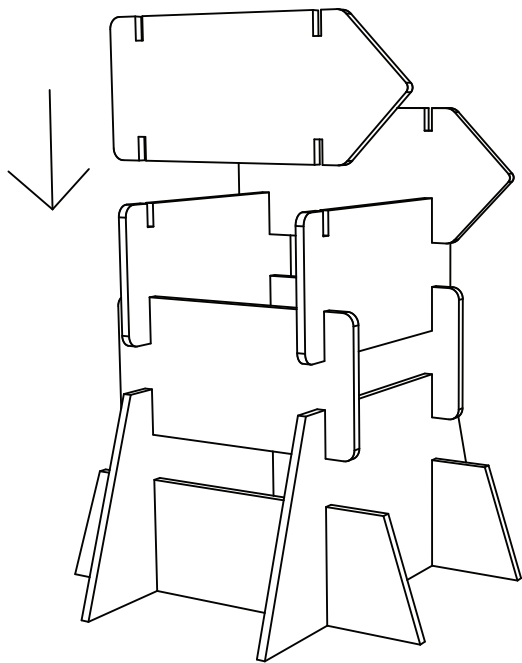
Option 2: Cut the end plus a few inches off the 2x6 at a 15 degree angle and screw to the triangle and the long board

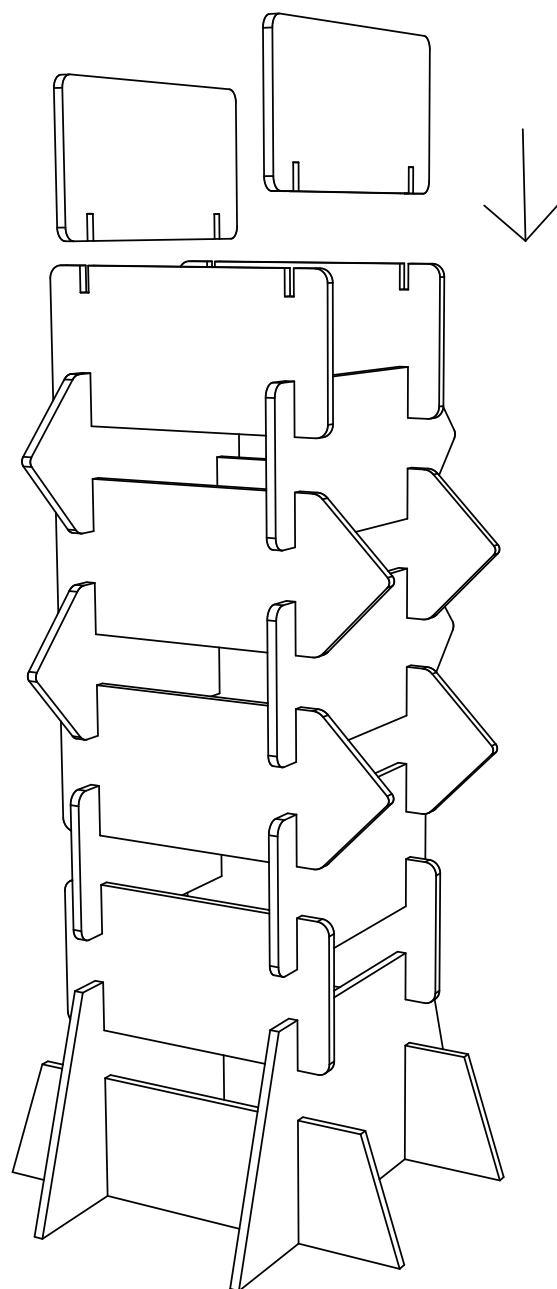
Once complete wrap barricade with reflective tape and/paint a bright color.

# Better Block Wayfinding Instructions











# ONE-WAY TRAFFIC ONLY

For more info, visit [KCMO.gov](https://www.kcmo.gov).



# ONE-WAY TRAFFIC ONLY

For more info, visit [KCMO.gov](https://www.kcmo.gov).





# NO THRU TRAFFIC

For more info, visit [KCMO.gov](https://www.kcmo.gov).



# NO THRU TRAFFIC

For more info, visit [KCMO.gov](https://www.kcmo.gov).



# LOCAL TRAFFIC AND DELIVERY VEHICLES ONLY

For more info, visit [KCMO.gov](https://www.kcmo.gov).



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